



State of New Jersey

New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection Natural and Historic Resources Group

Request for Information

February 11, 2009

New Jersey's state parks are home to sandy beaches, wide-open spaces with spectacular views and historic villages sheltered from time. While their amenities play host to varied recreational and cultural pursuits, they also provide endless opportunities to market them as unique destinations for special events, corporate retreats and conferences.

The State of New Jersey's Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) requests the participation of qualified facility and event managers to explore viable business opportunities to market the extraordinary resources at Liberty State Park in Jersey City, High Point State Park in Sussex and Wharton State Forest in Hammonton as venues for one-of-a-kind experiences.

The Department is seeking input from the hospitality industry to identify management models that enhance revenue potential and access to onsite amenities, as well as market to untapped audiences.

DEP is interested in hearing from the providers that currently manage hospitality services, including, but not limited to, conference and meeting planning, destination packaging and special event scheduling and promotion.

On **April 23, 2009**, the DEP will host an initial onsite meeting and tour at Liberty State Park for participants who respond to this Request for Information (RFI) session. Additional site visits to the other participating parks will be scheduled as needed. Participation in this session is voluntary and is not considered part of the formal Request for Proposal process expected to be initiated at a later date.

By **April 6, 2009**, responses to this RFI should be e-mailed to Robin.Madden@dep.state.nj.us or mailed to:

**Division of Parks and Forestry
501 East State Street
P.O. BOX 404
Trenton, N.J. 08625
Attention: Robin Madden**

Purpose

The DEP is seeking recommendations and feedback from for-profit or not-for-profit facility and event managers regarding potential business models and opportunities to enhance revenue potential; access to onsite amenities; and to better market the following parks as unique destinations for meetings/retreats, concerts/performances, weddings/special events and/or outdoor supply vendors/gift shops.

Background

Liberty State Park

Liberty State Park is a green oasis in the middle of Metropolitan northern New Jersey. Its wide open spaces, paved walkways and public gathering places provide visitors with inspiring views of the Statue of Liberty, Ellis Island and the New York skyline and harbor.

The historic Central Railroad of New Jersey (CRRNJ) Terminal, a grand setting for much of New Jersey's transportation history in the northeast, sits prominently at the north end of Liberty State Park. Ferry service to the Statue of Liberty and Ellis Island is available year round via ticketing at the CRRNJ, through a private concessionaire.

A two-mile promenade, Liberty Walk, links the picnic areas, Interpretive Center and the CRRNJ Terminal while presenting visitors with a sweeping view of the Hudson waterfront. The recently expanded Liberty Science Center, a popular attraction for students and families, is located in the park's western section.

The State of New Jersey owns and administers the land that comprises Liberty State Park, although several of the amenities are leased to private organizations, including the Liberty Landing Marina, Liberty House Restaurant, the Liberty Science Center and limited space in the CRRNJ Terminal.

The green spaces and historic settings of Liberty State Park already play host to festivals, concerts, movie shoots and special events, but the true tourism and marketing potential of the park's tremendous resources have yet to be realized.

Restored in 2005, the CRRNJ Terminal, with its elegant arched windows and soaring ceilings is a dramatic reminder of the millions of immigrants who made their way to their new lives in America. Today, what was once the waiting room for commuters is a 6,000 square-foot expanse ideal for after-hours events. An adjacent room accommodates an additional 3700 square feet of useable space, and there also is a separate 78-seat auditorium. There is limited space on the upper floors of the Terminal for conferences and meetings with more amazing views of the harbor and skyline.

Bordered on the west by Freedom Way and on the east by Liberty Walk, the park boasts the 88-acre Green Park, with magnificent crescent lawns, trails and lush landscaping. This "park within the park" has been host to a range of events from concerts to family reunions.

Nature continues to make a dramatic recovery in Liberty State Park's interior, where plans for one of the nation's largest urban ecological restoration projects are underway. The 250-acre restoration area focuses on providing public access and enhancing the park's historic resources. It will include new nature trails and educational opportunities.

Wharton State Forest & Historic Batsto Village

Wharton State Forest, located in the heart of the federally-protected Pine Barrens, is home to a remarkable wealth of nationally-significant natural and historic resources. It also is the site of **Batsto Village**, a former bog iron and glassmaking industrial center from 1766 to 1867.

With its unique natural and historic surroundings, Batsto Village has tremendous tourism potential. With more than 33 historic structures, including a gristmill, sawmill, general store, post office, workers' dwellings and the Batsto Mansion, the operation of this historic village holds much promise as a heritage destination.

The centerpiece of the village, the 32-room Batsto Mansion housed generations of ironmasters. In the late 19th century, after the demise of the iron and glass industries, the mansion was renovated into the Italianate style of architecture by Philadelphia businessman Joseph Wharton. In 2008, the mansion underwent a \$3 million restoration. Fourteen rooms, including the parlors, dining room, library and bedrooms, are currently open to the public for tours.

In 2005, the State completed a \$4 million expansion of the Visitors Center, the gateway to the village. This fully-accessible center includes magnificent exhibits that chronicle the history of the area and a 100-seat auditorium with state-of-the-art audio-visual equipment, which could easily be marketed as a location for corporate retreats and conferences. It also features a gift shop, with the potential to be outsourced.

The 928 square-foot Visitors Center is one of the first State buildings to be renovated using the Green Building Council's Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) principles, featuring a geothermal heating and cooling system and energy saving controlled lighting.

Wharton State Forest also boasts a wealth of recreational opportunities, including more than 155 miles of rivers and streams suitable for canoeing and fishing; and 500 miles of unpaved roads for mountain biking and horseback riding, including a 50-mile stretch of the Batona Trail. The park also features swimming at the Atsion Recreation Area and more than 50 campsites and cabins for lodging.

Easily accessible from the Garden State Parkway and Atlantic City, Batsto Village has enormous tourism potential combined with the opportunity to protect and interpret its abundant resources.

High Point State Park

Perched on the top of Kittatinny Mountain in Sussex County, High Point State Park boasts breathtaking panoramic views of rich farmland and forest, soft hills and lush valleys in three

states. Thanks to the work of the Civilian Conservation Corps in the 1930s, the mountain was made accessible for visitors.

Today, the park still looks much like it did in the early 1900s.

In the fall, the park's spectacular foliage draws crowds. And in the summer swimmers enjoy the refreshing waters of the spring-fed Lake Marcia. High Point offers superb trails for hikers and skiers, including a stretch of the Appalachian Trail, and quiet spots for campers and anglers.

One of the most visible and well-known landmarks in New Jersey, the High Point monument stands tribute to all service women and men in the state. At 220-feet, the granite-clad monument stands 1803 feet above sea level, the state's highest point of elevation. The multi-phase \$5 million restoration of the monument, completed in 2008, returned it to its original glory.

Aside from the impressive views and recreational pursuits, High Point State Park has the potential to offer a unique setting for special events, corporate retreats and training. Reminiscent of lodges from the days of the grand summer resorts, the park's current day Interpretive Center offers a 1960-square-foot stretch of space, complete with stone fireplaces and expansive windows overlooking the rocky outcroppings of the mountains.

The park also has a large cabin that can comfortably accommodate nearly 30 people, complete with a living room with woodstove, full kitchen, two bunkrooms, bathrooms and showers.

Additionally, there is potential to market High Point State Park with adjacent Stokes State Forest, also in Sussex County. Stokes is well known for its lakeside cabins, and the view from atop Sunrise Mountain. Combined with the amenities at High Point, it could be a lucrative location for a camp shop.

Please provide the following information along with an expression of your interest to attend the onsite meeting and tour at Liberty State Park:

1. Please provide a brief description of your mission.
2. Please indicate whether or not you provide any or all of the following hospitality services or amenities, and in what capacity:
 - Event scheduling, such as concerts, special events, etc. Y / N
 - Corporate Retreats Y / N
 - Business Meetings Y / N
 - Overnight Accommodations Y / N
 - Destination Marketing Y / N
 - Large scale corporate catering/banquets Y / N

- Food service concessions for facilities or events (i.e. Snack Bars) Y / N
3. Please list and provide additional information, including marketing materials, regarding other types of amenities or services you manage or provide.
 4. Has your company/entity ever formed a business partnership managing a government facility or marketing government assets?
 5. Do you provide services at a single facility or at multiple venues? Do you contract with a single client or multiple clients?

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